

a friend of my own race. His name, however, was

I was most surprised by the youthful character of his face. I knew that he had been frequently indisposed during the present year, and had been told that he was beginning to show the marks of his extreme age; but I should not have suspected him of being over seven-

His wrinkles are few and small, and his skin has a smoothness and delicacy rarely seen in old men. His hair although snow white is still abundant, his steps slow but firm, and his manner active almost to restlessness. He sleeps but four hours out of the twenty-four, reads and replies to his daily train of letters, and suffers no single occurrence of the least interest in any part of the world to escape his attention. I could not perceive that his memory, the first mental faculty to show decay, is all impaired. He talks rapidly, with the greatest assurance

He began by referring to my winter journey into Lapland. 'Why do you choose the win-

ter!" he asked. "Your experience will be very interesting. It is true, but will you not suffer from the severe cold?" "That remains to be seen," I answered. "I have tried all climates except the Arctic, without the least injury.—The last two years of my travels were spent in tropical countries, and now I wish to have the strongest possible contrast." "That is quite natural," he remarked, "and I can understand how your object in travel must lead you to see such contrasts; but you must possess a remarkably healthy organization." "You doubted

know from your own experience,' I said, 'that nothing preserves a man's vitality like travel.' 'Very true,' he answered, 'if it does not kill the outset. For my part, I keep my health everywhere, like yourself. During five years in South America and the West Indies, I passed through the midst of black vomit and yellow fever untouched.'

I spoke of my projected visit to Russia, and my desire to traverse the Russian-Tartar provinces of Central Asia. The Kirghiz steppe

he said, were very monotonous: fifty miles gave you the picture of a thousand; but the people were exceedingly interesting. If I desired to go there I would have no difficulty in passing through them to the Chinese frontier; but the southern provinces of Siberia, he thought would best repay me. The scenery among the Altai Mountains was very grand. From his window in one of the Siberian towns, he had counted eleven peaks covered with eternal snow. The Kirghizes, he added, were among the few races whose habits had remained unchanged for thousands of years.

ands of years, and they had the remarkable peculiarity of combining a monastic with a nomadic life. They were partly Buddhist and partly by Mussulman, and their monkish sects followed the different clans in their wanderings, camped on their devotions in the encampments, and inside of a sacred circle marked out by spears. He had seen their ceremonies, and was struck by their resemblance to those of the Catholic lic church.

Humboldt's recollections of the Alta Moun-

'You have traveled in Mexico,' said he; 'do you not agree with me in the opinion that the finest mountains in the world are those singular cones of perpetual snow, rising out of the splendid vegetation of the tropics! The Himalayas, although loftier, can scarcely make the same impression: they lie farther to the north without the belt of tropical growths, and the sides are dreary sterile in comparison. You remember Orizaba,' continued he; 'there is

engraving from a rough sketch of mine. I hope you will find it correct." He rose and took down the illustrated folio which accompanied the last edition of his "Minor Acceptions" turned over the leaves, and recalled at once the plate, some reminiscence of his American travels. "I still think," he remarked, as he closed the book, "that Chimborazo is the grandest mountain in the world."

Among the objects in his study was a lively chameleon, in a box with a glass lid. To the animal, which was about six inches long.

lazily dazing on a bed of sand, with a big black fly (the unconscious provision for his dinner) perched upon his back. 'He has just been so close to me from Smyrna,' said Humboldt; 'he has been very listless and unconcerned in his manners.' Just then the chameleon opened one of his long, tubular eyes, and looked up at us. 'A peculiar liability of this animal,' he continued, 'is its power of looking in different directions at the same time. He can turn one eye toward heaven while the other inspects the earth. There is

After showing me some of Hildebrand's water color drawings, he returned to his seat and began to converse about American affairs, of which he seemed to be entirely familiar. He spoke with great admiration of Colonel Fremont, whose defeat he profoundly regretted. "But this is at least a most cheering sign," he said, "an omen of good for your country, that not more than half a million people supported by the votes of a man of Fremont's character and achievements." With regard to Buchanan, he said

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had occasion to speak of his Ostend Manifesto not long since, in a letter which has been published, and I could not characterize its author by any milder term than savage.' He then spoke of our authors, and inquired particularly after Washington Irving, whom he had not seen. I told him I had the fortune to know Mr. Irving, and had seen him not long before leaving New York. 'He must be at least twenty years old,' said Humboldt. 'He is seventy,' answered, 'but as young as ever.' 'Ah,'

I have lived so long that I have almost lost the consciousness of time. I belong to the school of Jefferson and Gallatin, and I heard of Washington's death while traveling in South America.'

I have repeated but the smallest portion of his conversation, which flowed on in an uninterrupted stream of the richest knowledge. It resented it to my mind, after leaving. I was surprised to find how great a number of subjects he had touched upon, and how much he

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said, or seemed to have said—for he has a rare faculty of placing a subject in the clearest and most vivid light by a few luminous words—concerning each. He thought, as he talked, without effort. I should compare his brain to the fountain of Vaucluse—a still, deep and
